

I wish to, in support of what he has said so eloquently—and I also commend Senator DOMENICI from New Mexico, who has had such a key role in this effort—I wish to tell a story that helps put in perspective what we are talking about.

Two years ago, a group of Senators traveled to China, led by Senator STEVENS and Senator INOUE. We were received very well because Senator STEVENS had flown with the Flying Tigers. He flew the first plane to land in Beijing after World War II, and the top Chinese leaders had not forgotten. And, of course, Senator INOUE is a Congressional Medal of Honor winner for his heroic service to our country in World War II.

So we saw President Hu, and the No. 2 man in China, Mr. Wu. What struck me about those two meetings—which were about an hour long, and during which we could have talked about Taiwan or Iraq or Iran or China's military buildup or America's intelligence system—the subject about which they wanted to talk the most and which animated them the most in their conversation was the subject Senator BINGAMAN just discussed: how China can use its brainpower to create a higher standard of living for the people of China.

We are in an economic slowdown in America today, and we are debating and talking here about how we restore our level of progress economically. We are talking not only about the Federal budget, we are talking about the family budget. We are talking about family incomes. We are talking about jobs. That was the same subject the No. 1 and No. 2 men in China wanted to talk about as well. What were they focusing on? The fact of trying to give to China the same kind of brainpower advantage in creating a high standard of living we have had in America, since World War II especially. This year, despite the economic slowdown, the United States of America will create about 30 percent of all the world's wealth for 5 percent of all the world's people, who are those of us who live in the United States. That is an astonishing fact. There are many reasons for it, including our free market system, our geography, our character, the immigration that has brought talented people from all over the world who are entrepreneurial in their spirit. But most people agree that the major fact in the high standard of living for this country since World War II has been our brainpower advantage. We have not only some of the best universities in the world, we have almost all of them. We have a set of national laboratories that is unequaled in the world. Until recently, at least, our system of kindergarten through the 12th grade education has been the envy of the world. As a result of all that brainpower, we have created a lot of jobs and a high standard of living. Increasingly, that is where the new jobs come from. That is why we like to have foreign students come here, because they

become educated in our universities and we are, in effect, insourcing brainpower, so they create Google in the United States of America rather than in India or in China, and the jobs are here in the United States of America.

So the America COMPETES Act, to which Senator BINGAMAN referred, had broad support here. It is the only legislation we have had in the last 4 years that I remember was supported by Senator FRIST and Senator REID. Then, when the Senate changed hands and the Democrats were in the majority, it was sponsored by Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL. At one point, it had 70 Members of the Senate backing it, 35 Senators who are Democrats and 35 Republicans. It all came from a request that Senator BINGAMAN and I and others—including House Member BART GORDON of Tennessee, the chairman of the Science Committee now—made of the National Academy of Sciences: Please tell us, in priority order, what are the 10 things we in Congress ought to do to help keep our brainpower advantage so our jobs will not go overseas. Norm Augustine, the former chairman of Lockheed Martin, a member of the National Academy of Engineering, assembled a group of Nobel laureates, university presidents, and others, and they came back with 20 specific recommendations in the Augustine report. There was also other important work being done by the Council on Competitiveness. We put all that together over 2 years. The President weighed in, in a big way, in two straight State of the Union Addresses and budgets. The Speaker of the House also weighed in, in an important way. So in this endeavor, on this important issue, we are all on the same team. But what we are doing today with this amendment is making sure we get where we have agreed we want to go.

Now, for President Hu in China, all he had to do was walk over to their National Academy of Sciences in China, he convened them all in the Great Hall—and said: This is what we will do over the next 10 years. We are going to increase support for our universities and research through a percent of our domestic product. We are going to recruit from American universities talented Chinese professors who have distinguished themselves in the United States and they are going to come back and help improve Chinese universities. So, in China, the top man gave the order and they are on their way. Here, a lot more of us have to be involved, but we are all involved. The President has said we need an 18-percent increase for Fiscal Year 2009 to stay on a track to double funding for the physical sciences over the next 10 years; 18 percent for the Office of Science, which is our principal funder of our national laboratories and science programs, and 13 percent in the National Science Foundation. That is bigger than it normally would be because of the way the appropriations process worked last year. We didn't do what we all agreed we wanted to be able to do.

So the Budget Committee did a pretty good job in reporting to the floor a budget resolution with sufficient provisions to fund this year's version of the America COMPETES Act. There are a wide range of those programs. There are opportunities for low-income children to take advanced placement courses which they now can't afford and to train the teachers who need to be trained to teach those courses. There are opportunities for summer academies at our laboratories and at universities to interest our students in math and sciences. The Augustine Commission reviewed programs all over America and recommended only a handful that ought to be emulated, and they included programs such as the UTeach program in Texas at the University of Texas which attracts outstanding students in chemistry and physics, for example, and gives them scholarships if they will agree to become teachers of chemistry and physics.

Former Gov. Jim Hunt of North Carolina told me the University of North Carolina only graduated one physics teacher in one recent year. We are not going to learn much physics in America, to keep up with the Chinese and Indians and Irish and all the others who are trying to increase their brainpower to increase their jobs if we don't graduate physics teachers. So the Budget Committee did a good and important job.

What we are trying to do is to get back on track to double funding for the physical sciences over 10 years, which is what we all agreed we should try to do. That was our goal. A huge majority in the House, the Senate, and the President himself, we are asking that the Senate make room in the budget for the President's number for the America COMPETES Act. That is what this amendment does.

So I feel confident we will have substantial support, because so many of us worked so hard for so long on this idea.

We Republicans are talking these days in unflattering ways about the Democratic budget. Senator REID, the majority leader, said he hadn't heard about tort reform yet. Well, he will, before we are through. One way to help the family budget is to make it easier for pregnant women in rural areas to get medical care without driving 60 miles, and one way to do that is to put some limits on medical malpractice suits. That is tort reform. That will help the family budget. Lower taxes help the family budget. Lower energy costs help the family budget. But on this side of the aisle, we also believe that better schools and investments in science and technology, so we can keep our brainpower advantage and keep our jobs from going overseas, is an important part of a pro-growth plan.

When I was Governor of Tennessee, Tennessee's taxes were the lowest in the country. I say this with great respect to the Senator from New Hampshire, who is also here. I double